

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Child Care for TANF Participants

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Tribal TANF

Supersedes: **New Section**

References: **52-2-701 – 704 & 52-2-711 – 713 MCA**
Sections 37.80.101-103, 37.80.201-202, 37.80.205-206, 37.80.301-302,
37.80.305-306, 37.80.315-316, 37.80.501 ARM
45 CFR Part 98.20 – 47

General Rule

Tribal TANF families are dually eligible for Tribal Block Grant child care and State CCDF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. CCR&Rs must verify that the family is not receiving Tribal Block Grant child care before determining eligibility for State CCDF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. DPHHS currently contracts with each Child Care Resource & Referral agency to determine eligibility for families receiving TANF.

If the Tribal TANF program exhausts child care funding or if Tribal Block Grant families find they are covered for additional activities under State CCDF child care rules, families may apply for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship.

**Application &
CCUBS
Processing**

A family participating in the Tribal TANF cash program completes the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship application. During the application process the family is notified of their rights and responsibilities. Each CCR&R must work with their local Tribal TANF programs, to determine how much child care assistance is required to complete Tribal Activity Plan (TAP) activities.

All income and activity information is entered in CCUBS for the following purposes:

- ☐ The family may wish to be eligible for the Non-TANF waiting list
- ☐ Data is used for federal reporting purposes
- ☐ Data is used in aggregate form to profile the population served by the program.

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**Qualifying
Families &
Children
Participating in
Tribal TANF**

Parents who need child care to perform Tribal Activity Plans (TAP) activities are eligible for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. Children are not required to be part of the TANF Cash assistance unit.

Parents and children are subject to non-tribal Best Beginnings Scholarship eligibility requirements, as outlined in Child Eligibility Section 1-6 and Parent Eligibility in Section 1-7.

**Qualified Child
Care Provider**

Families receiving a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship must use either a licensed, registered or legally unregistered provider (LUP) approved for payment purposes. See Section 1-8 in this manual.

If the tribe runs their own child care licensing program and the state has an agreement to recognize that program, the Department would pay for care in that program.

**CCR&R Manages
Child Care**

The Child Care Resource & Referral Agency (CCR&R) will manage the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship for the family. The family must contact the CCR&R to approve the child care scholarship.

- ⇒ The CCR&R will enter the case into CCUBS upon receiving an application from the Tribal TANF family.
- ⇒ The CCR&R Eligibility Specialist interviews the family and determines the amount of child care needed and the child care schedule.
- ⇒ If the family decides to use a legally unregistered provider, the CCR&R will process the LUP application, as outlined in Section 6-2.
- ⇒ The CCR&R will issue a child care certification plan corresponding to the family's TAP renewal date.
- ⇒ The CCR&R Eligibility Specialist may adjust the child care certification plan as needed to match TAP activities.
- ⇒ The CCR&R Eligibility Specialist will close the Best

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Beginnings Child Care Scholarship if the family no longer needs child care to perform TAP activities, fails to pay their copayment or is no longer receiving Tribal TANF assistance.

A family may need assistance in finding a child care provider. In these situations, the family must contact the CCR&R to receive a listing of possible child care providers.

Coordinate services:

- ❑ The Tribal TANF Case Manager shall mail a referral form (DPHHS – CC-051) to the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist when a need for child care has been determined to complete TAP activities.
- ❑ If the TAP is renegotiated early, the Tribal TANF Case Manager shall notify the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist.
- ❑ If a sanction is being investigated, the Tribal TANF Case Manager shall notify the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist.
- ❑ If a sanction is upheld, the Tribal TANF Case Manager shall notify the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist.
- ❑ The Tribal TANF Case Manager, in conjunction with the CCR&R Eligibility Specialist, will inform the Tribal TANF parent that they may be responsible for the cost of child care which is used for activities not related to their TAP. If child care is used for activities not related to the family's TAP schedule, the Tribal TANF Case Manager will notify the CCR&R of the situation, which may result in an overpayment to the parent. The CCR&R will process the overpayment and notify the Tribal TANF Case Manager.

**Re-certifying
Child Care for
TANF
Participants**

A re-certification reminder is mailed to families six (6) weeks before their child care certification plan expires.

NOTE: If the certification plan is less than six (6) weeks, CCUBS may not automatically generate a re-certification reminder. The CCR&R is responsible for generating appropriate notices for the parent and the provider.

- ❑ The family shall notify the CCR&R of any schedule changes occurring under the TAP, that affect the need for child care.

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Loss of Eligibility

The family loses Best Beginning Child Care Scholarship eligibility if:

- ☐ They lose eligibility for Tribal TANF,
- ☐ They fail to pay the required co-payment fees within the month due,
- ☐ There is no qualifying child in the home, or
- ☐ The parent has been sanctioned and there is no longer a need for child care during TAP activities.

Sanctions

If a parent is sanctioned, a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may be offered if the participant is complying with portions of the TAP agreement.

- ☐ Child care assistance may still be available in two situations:
 - Partial TAP compliance - if the parent and Tribal TANF Case Manager agree to continue some TAP activities.
 - A need is established when one parent is participating in Tribal TANF Cash and the other parent is disqualified. The Tribal TANF Case Manager will determine if there is a need for child care and communicate with the CCR&R.

The family has the option to give up Tribal TANF Cash benefits and apply for a Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship.

Co-payment Requirement

Each family receiving a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship is required to contribute toward the cost of the child care scholarship based on the family's ability to pay. The co-payment is based on a sliding fee scale. Families eligible for Tribal TANF Cash benefits have a \$10 monthly co-payment.

TANF Families Require Affordable, Appropriate, Suitable Care Within a Reasonable Distance

CCR&Rs in conjunction with the Tribal TANF Case Manager shall inform the families participating in the Tribal TANF Cash program that they are exempt from penalties for non-participation in required activities if they need child care and cannot find child care for children under age six that is appropriate, affordable, suitable, and within a reasonable distance. These terms are defined as follows:

Affordable Child Care means the total parental (caretaker relative or person

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acting in loco parentis) co-payment and ‘above and beyond’ obligation does not exceed 25% of gross family income.

Appropriate Child Care means the child care provider must meet applicable state licensing/registration standards.

Reasonable Distance means:

- a. If the family is without either their own (or arranged) transportation, and there is no public transportation, their home or work site must be no more than 3 miles from the child care provider.
- b. If the family has their own (or arranged) transportation, their home or work site is within one-hour travel distance, one-way, from the child care provider.

Unsuitable Informal Care means care, which does not meet applicable state licensing standards even though it may be the parent’s choice.

Serving the Family Families may lose eligibility for a brief period during a transition. Policies are available to maintain continuity of care for the child and maintain an established relationship with the child’s provider. Refer to Section 6 ‘Serving the Family’, in this manual, for details. Additional Best Beginning Child Care Scholarship management issues are addressed in the same section.

